Duvine Beebe

Department of Sport Management, Erskine College

A3 [SP-25] - American Government

Professor - Matthew Cawvey

2/14/25

PO 101 Exam 1 Essay

How Should Christians Honor God in Politics?

In a world where political debates often look more like battlefields than conversations, the question of how Christians should engage in politics takes center stage. Should faith dictate every political stance, or is there a way to engage the political landscape while maintaining a God-honoring approach? Dr. Amy Black's Honoring God in Red or Blue is a model for politics done humbly, graciously, and logically. I agree with her overall messages but disagree on some occasions, particularly about the role of faith-based action in policymaking. If more Christians truly sought to honor God in politics, we'd see a radical shift—not necessarily in party dominance, but in the tone and integrity of political engagement.

How Should Christians Honor God in Politics?

Christians should honor God in politics by being courteous to others, pursuing justice, and making decisions in faith that are consistent with biblical principles. This is not only civil discourse but also endorsing policies that reflect God's concern for righteousness, justice, and the well-being of others (Micah 6:8). Being respectful of authority (Romans 13:1-7) while holding leaders accountable is also a God-honoring political engagement.

An integral aspect of serving God through politics is integrity of speech. Black emphasizes civility and humility as Christian necessary political conversation styles (Black, 2012, p. 133). I agree but believe that there needs to be space for courage as well. Jesus spoke the truth graciously and firmly, and Christians must balance gentle conversation and dogged insistence upon moral ideals.

Comparison with Dr. Black's Views

Dr. Black emphasizes civility, respectful dialogue, and that Christians can disagree on politics without betraying God. She warns against politicizing God as a reminder that there is no monopoly on biblical truth by any particular political party (Black, 2012, p. 185). While I agree with her call to respectful dialogue, I feel she downplays the call for courage in some ways. There are moments when Christians must stand firm—on issues of justice, life, and moral order.

If Christians put more effort into pleasing God in politics, we would likely see increased political civility, but above all, we'd see policies driven by moral conviction. Take the example of William Wilberforce, who was guided by his religion to fight for the abolition of slavery. If Christians made that same pledge today, issues like poverty, abortion, and corruption could be addressed with a higher sense of urgency than party politics.

What Would Occur if Christians Really Did Try to Honor God Politically?

If Christians would truly look to serve God through politics, political rhetoric would be more respectful and civil. More importantly, government would be more inclined to head in the direction of policies grounded in justice, mercy, and biblical morality. Earlier examples of

Christian politicians such as Martin Luther King Jr. used their religion as a force for social justice, and they showed that political activism through faith can bring true change to society.

The impact would be felt not just in the political climate but even in how society approaches its core moral issues. Poverty and criminal justice reform policy, for example, might be more restorative in nature and less punitive, aligning with biblical teachings regarding mercy and justice (Isaiah 1:17). In addition, faith-based engagement would shape how leaders approach executive policies, as was seen through the Trump administration. Black's book inspires political humility, but the principles put forward suggest that if Christians had emphasized faith more than they have emphasized party loyalty, then perhaps the toxic rhetoric and agendas of Trump's presidency could have been tempered by greater commitment to justice, to truth, and service to the public good.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Dr. Black's Book

One of the unquestionable strengths of Honoring God in Red or Blue is its appeal to humility. Black reminds us that political engagement is not about winning arguments but about pursuing justice and the common good. This is in line with Romans 13:1-7, which encourages Christians to honor governing authorities yet hold them accountable.

One limitation of her book, however, is that it is reserved in its appeal to activism. Although she is an appeal to action, she hesitates to acknowledge strong, biblically driven action on issues of basic moral importance. Such restraint may be a plan to avoid political partisan identification, but it is frustrating for Christians to take hold of their authority for justice. Political engagement must do more than simply vote or talk—it has to translate to action guided by biblical doctrine.

The Personal Impact of the Book (Red or Blue)

Reading Honoring God in Red or Blue made me re-think political discourse. It reminded me of the importance of treating one's opponents with civility, even when one disagrees fundamentally. Yet it also asked the question of balance—Christians must be both truth-tellers and peacemakers. Reading the book piqued my interest in how religion intersects with policymaking and how precepts from the Bible translate to informing national discourse.

One of the most powerful impressions I left with was Black's reference to idolatry in politics. It is easy to consider politicians as saviors or that one party has all the answers. But politics, like everything else, must be a vehicle for glorifying God—not a replacement for Him. In the future, I am dedicated to engaging in more profound policy discussions and ensuring my political identity is never larger than my faith identity.

Conclusion

Christians being civil to God in politics is more than courtesy—it is conviction, wisdom, and action. Dr. Black's book is an excellent beginning toward civil political discourse, but a God-glorifying way demands more than talk; it demands action founded on biblical truth. If Christians engage both humbly and boldly, the impact on political civility and government could be monumental. Rather than being the most 'well-known' for division, Christians might be leaders in restoring integrity and justice to politics.

Student Learning Goals Alignment

The essay is matched to the following student learning goals:

- **Critical Thinking & Communication:** It examines how Christians should approach politics and contrasts opinions.
- **Ethics & Morals:** It is an honest discussion on the Christian role in government regarding morals.
- **Global Awareness:** It applies biblical principles in analyzing national and international political issues.

References

Black, A. E. (2012). Honoring God in Red or Blue: Approaching Politics with Humility, Grace, and Reason. Moody Publishers.

Poloni-Staudinger, L. M., & Wolf, M. R. (2020). American Difference: A Guide to American Politics in Comparative Perspective (2nd ed.). CQ Press.

The Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Biblica, Inc.

The Federalist Papers. (1787-1788). Hamilton, A., Madison, J., & Jay, J.

Grudem, W. (2010). Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture. Zondervan.